

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

*Daniel Saves Susanna.*

O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory.—*Wis. 4, 1.*

**A**MONG the captive Jews in Babylon there was a man named Joakim, whose wife, Susanna, was very beautiful, and feared God. Now Joakim being very rich and influential, it happened that many of his countrymen resorted to his house. Among these were two of the ancients who had been appointed judges for that year. The two old men were considered by the people as wise and virtuous, but in reality they were very wicked.

2. Now the visitors that came to Joakim generally left at noon, and then Susanna would walk forth into the orchard near by to refresh herself in the shade. The two old men knew this, and one day they went into the orchard and hid themselves behind the trees. A little later Susanna came in and fastened the gate, believing herself alone. Then the wicked old men came forth from their hiding-place and tried to make her commit sin.

3. Susanna was horrified at their proposal; but they said that if she did not consent to their wishes, they would publicly accuse her of a great crime. Then Susanna raised her beautiful eyes to heaven, sighed and said: "I am straitened on every side, for if I do this thing, it is death to me, and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall into your hands, without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord."

4. She then cried out with a loud voice; but the elders cried out against her. One of them ran to the orchard-gate and opened it, that the people might enter. Then he and his companion accused Susanna of a most wicked act. Next day, accompanied by her parents and children, and other relatives, Susanna was brought before the tribunal of justice,



where she was condemned and sentenced to death. But she weeping, looked up to heaven, for her heart had confidence in God.

5. And the Lord heard her prayer. As she was led out to death, Daniel, inspired from above, exclaimed: "I am clear from the blood of this woman." Then all the people began to ask him: "What meaneth this word that thou hast spoken?" He told them to return to judgment, because the elders had borne false witness against Susanna. Then the people went back in haste. But Daniel ordered the two accusers to be brought in separately.

6. This being done, he said to the first that came: "O thou that art grown old in evil days, now are thy sins come out. Tell me under what tree thou sawest them conversing together?" He said: "Under a mastic-tree." Daniel replied: "Thou hast lied against thy own head." Then he sent him away, and had the other brought in, whom he asked: "Tell me, under what tree didst thou take them conversing together?" He answered: "Under a holm-tree." Daniel replied: "Thou hast lied against thy own head."

7. The people saw by the contrary statements of the old men that their testimony was false, and rising up against them, they put them both to death. Susanna was restored to her joyful husband and children, and they and all the people blessed God, who always saves and protects those who place their hopes in Him. Whereupon Daniel became great in the sight of the people.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Who was among the captive Jews in Babylon? Who was his wife? What sort of a woman was she? Who were among the Jews that frequented the house of Joakim? What sort of men were these judges? 2. What was Susanna accustomed to do about noon when the visitors retired? What did the two old men, knowing this, do? How did they act when Susanna came in and fastened the door, believing herself alone? 3. Susanna being horrified at their proposal, what did they tell her? What did Susanna then



say, raising her eyes to heaven? 4. What did she then do? What did the elders do? What did one of them do? Of what did he and his companion then accuse Susanna? What happened to Susanna when she was brought next day before the tribunal of justice? In whom had Susanna confidence? 5. Did the Lord hear her prayer? As she was led out to death, what did Daniel, inspired from above, exclaim? What did the people then begin to ask him? What did he tell them? When the people went back in haste, what did Daniel order to be done? 6. What did he say to the first that came in? What did the old man say? What did Daniel say? What did Daniel ask the other old man? What did he answer? What did Daniel reply? 7. What did the people see by the contrary statements of the old men? What did they do to them? What was done to Susanna? What did all the people do? What did Daniel become?

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

### *The Prophet Daniel.—The Three Young Men in the Fiery Furnace.*

Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.—Ps. 49, 15.

**N**ABUCHODONOSOR had a dream which terrified him greatly. He saw a large statue, the head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet, part iron and part clay. Then he noticed a stone rolling from the mountain, which struck the statue on the feet and shattered it; and behold, the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. None of the wise men could interpret the dream. Then the king called for Daniel to whom God had revealed the meaning of the dream.

2. The whole statue signified the great empires of the world that would succeed each other. The head of gold betokened the reign of Nabuchodonosor himself, most glorious among kings; the breast and the arms of silver represented the next empire, that of the Medes and Persians; the belly



and the thighs of brass prefigured the dominion of Alexander the Great; the legs and feet of iron signified the great Roman empire which conquered all the others. The stone that fell from the mountain, typified a new kingdom that God himself would found on earth, and which, from a small beginning, would gradually grow strong and overcome all other kingdoms, and would last forever. The king, hearing the interpretation, said to Daniel: "Verily your God is the God of gods, and Lord of kings, and a revealer of hidden things." He raised Daniel to a high station and bestowed on him many gifts.

3. About this time king Nabuchodonosor made a great statue of gold which he placed on a pillar in the plain of Babylon. All the princes and nobles of his kingdom were invited to assist at the dedication of this statue. Heralds were sent out everywhere to announce to all the people that when they heard the sound of the trumpets and flutes and other instruments of music, they should fall down and adore the golden statue. And it came to pass that no one disobeyed this order except Ananias, Misael, and Azarias.

4. It was announced to the king that the three young men had refused to worship the golden statue. Then Nabuchodonosor, full of rage, said to them: "Who is the god that shall deliver you out of my hand?" They answered: "Our God whom we worship is able to save us from the furnace of burning fire; but if He will not, we will not worship thy god, nor adore the golden statue." The king then ordered that a furnace should be heated seven times more than ordinarily, and that three of the strongest soldiers of his army should bind the young men and cast them clothed as they were, into the furnace.

5. The order was instantly executed. But the angel of the Lord went down with the three holy youths into the furnace and behold, inside, the flames were extinguished, but outside, the fires burned and flashed and destroyed the men who



had executed the king's cruel order. They were instantly consumed by the raging fire.

6. Within the furnace the air was cool and fresh, like to the breeze when the dew is falling. And the three young men, seeing themselves so wonderfully preserved, sang a glorious canticle of praise and thanksgiving, which the Church of God still sings in her divine service.



THE THREE YOUNG MEN IN THE FURNACE.

7. The king, astonished to hear voices in the furnace singing, rose up and said to his nobles: "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? I see four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the son of God."

8. Then going to the door of the furnace, he cried: "Ye servants of the Most High God, go ye forth and come." Thereupon the young men came forth safe and sound, not so much as a hair of their heads was burned, nor was the smell



of fire on their garments. Seeing this prodigy,<sup>1</sup> Nabuchodonosor blessed God, saying: "Blessed be the God of Ananias, Misael, and Azarias, who has sent His angel, and delivered His servants that believed in Him."

9. He then decreed that whosoever, in all his kingdom, blasphemed the God whom these young men adored should be put to death, for there was no other God who had power to save. The three young men were raised to high dignities in the kingdom of Babylon. The last kingdom, or the stone falling from the mountain, mentioned by Daniel, signifies the Catholic Church which Jesus Christ established upon earth. At first it was small, but it kept on increasing and still increases and will endure to the end of the world.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Relate Nabuchodonosor's dream. 2. Explain the dream. What did the king say to Daniel? To what did the king raise him? 3. What did King Nabuchodonosor make? Who were invited to assist at the dedication of this statue? What were heralds sent out to announce to all the people? Who alone disobeyed this order? 4. What did the king order to be done to the young men? 5. Who went down into the furnace with the young men? Who were consumed by the raging fire? 6. What was there within the furnace? What did the three young men sing? 7. What did the king say to his nobles? 8. What did the king cry out, going to the door of the furnace? How did the young men come forth from the furnace? Seeing this prodigy, what did Nabuchodonosor do and say? 9. What did he then decree? What was done for the three young men? Of what is the stone falling from the mountain a figure?

<sup>1</sup> PROD'IGY, something which surpasses the power of nature.



## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

## King Baltassar—The God Bel.

I will call upon the name of the Lord.—*Ps. 115, 13.*

**A**FTER the death of Nabuchodonosor, Baltassar, his grandson, ascended the throne. One day Baltassar gave a great banquet to the nobles of his kingdom, and ordered the golden cups, which his grandfather had taken from the temple of Jerusalem, to be brought forth and to be used at the banquet.

2. The sacred vessels were brought, and the king and his wives and his officers drank from them, and they praised their gods of gold and of silver and of stone. At that moment a hand appeared and fingers were seen writing three words upon the wall over against the king. Baltassar grew pale and trembled, for the points of that hand were moving and wrote: MANE, THECEL, PHARES. He called for his wise men, that they might interpret the writing. But none of them could do so. Then Daniel, who had received from God the gift of prophecy, together with that of explaining hidden things, came forth, and spoke to the king:

3. "Thou hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven. Thou hast praised thy gods of gold and silver; but the Lord of heaven who hath thy breath in his hand, thou hast not glorified. Thou knowest that thy grandfather was punished for his pride; that he was driven away from the sons of men, and that he ate grass in the field with the ox and the ass, and yet thou hast not humbled thy heart.

4. "Wherefore God hath sent the fingers of the hand to write, and this is the writing, and this is the interpretation thereof: Mane: God hath numbered thy kingdom, and hath finished it. Thecel: thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting. Phares: thy kingdom is divided, and is



given to the Medes and Persians." That very night Baltassar was slain and the prophecy of Daniel was thus fulfilled. Some time after the army of the Medes and Persians, under Darius, their great leader, took the city of Babylon, and divided the kingdom.

5. Cyrus, king of Persia, and successor of Darius, soon took possession of all the Assyrian empire, of which Babylon was the capital. He treated Daniel with marked respect and made him sit down at his own table. At this time the god Bel was worshiped in Babylon as the supreme deity. There were spent upon him every day twelve large measures of flour, forty sheep, and sixty vessels of wine.

6. The king went every day to adore this god Bel. But Daniel adored the true God. Then the king asked him why he did not adore Bel. Daniel replied that he adored the true and living God, who created earth and heaven, and whose power extends over all things. The king, much surprised, asked Daniel, if he did not believe that Bel was a living god, seeing how much he consumed every day.

7. Daniel smiled and said: "O king, be not deceived; for this Bel is clay within and brass without, neither has he eaten at any time." The king, being angry, called for the priests of the god, and said to them: "If ye tell me not who it is that eats up these provisions, ye shall die. But if ye can show that Bel eateth these things, Daniel shall die, because he has blasphemed against Bel." Daniel agreed to the king's proposal.

8. Then the king, accompanied by Daniel, went to the temple of Bel. And the priests of Bel said to the king: "Behold, we go out, and do thou, O king, set on the meats, and make ready the wine, and shut the door fast, and seal it with thy own ring; and when thou comest in the morning, if thou find not that Bel has eaten up all, we will suffer death, or, else Daniel who has lied against us."

9. They were not afraid, because they had a secret door under the altar, whereby they entered and consumed the



meats. The priests having gone out, the king caused the meats and the wine to be placed before Bel. This being done, the servants of Daniel brought ashes, and he sifted them all over the temple in the presence of the king. Then they all left the temple, the door of which was sealed with the royal seal.

10. But the priests went in by night with their wives and children, as they were accustomed to do, and they ate and drank all that had been placed before the idol. The king arose early in the morning and went to the temple with Daniel. They found the seal unbroken, and opening the door, went in. The king looked at the table, and seeing that all the provisions had disappeared, cried out: "Great art thou, O Bel, and there is not any deceit with thee."

11. Daniel laughed, and pointing to the floor, said: "Mark, whose footsteps these are!" The king, much amazed, said: "I see the footsteps of men, women and children." Then examining more closely, he found the secret door by which the priests were wont to go in and out. Thereupon the king, being enraged against the priests of Bel, ordered them all to be put to death. And he gave Bel up to Daniel, who destroyed him and his temple.

#### QUESTIONS.

1. Who ascended the throne after Nabuchodonosor? One day when Baltassar gave a great banquet, what did he order to be brought and used? 2. What did the king, his wives, and his officers do with the sacred vessels? What was seen at that moment? Whom did Baltassar order to be sent for to interpret the writing? Could they do so? Who then came forth? 3. What did Daniel say to the king? Of what did he tell him? 4. What did he say was the meaning of the writing on the wall? When was this prophecy of Daniel fulfilled? How was it fulfilled? Who took the city some time after? 5. Who soon took possession of the whole Assyrian empire? What city was the capital of that empire? How did Cyrus treat Daniel? What was worshipped at this time in Babylon as the supreme divinity. What provisions were given to Bel every day? 6. What did the king do every day? What did he ask Daniel? What did Daniel reply? What did the king, much surprised, ask Daniel? 7. What did Daniel say, smiling? What did the



king, being angry, say to the priests of Bel? 8. When the king and Daniel went to the temple of Bel, what did the priests say? 9. Why were they not afraid? The priests having gone out, what did the king cause to be done? This being done, what did Daniel command the servants to do? What was then done to the door? 10. What did the priests, with their wives and children, do during the night? What did the king and Daniel find on going to the temple next morning? What did the king cry out, seeing that all the provisions had disappeared? 11. What did Daniel say, pointing to the floor? What did the king say? On examining closely, what did they find? What did the king then order to be done to the priests of Bel? What did he give up to Daniel? What did Daniel do with the idol?

## CHAPTER LXXIX.

### *Daniel in the Lions' Den.*

Thou hast remembered me, O God, and Thou hast not forsaken them that love Thee.—*Dan. 14, 37.*

**T**HE people of Babylon worshiped also a great dragon. One day the king said to Daniel: "Behold, thou canst not say now that this is not a living god; adore him, therefore." Daniel replied: "Give me leave, O king, and I will kill this dragon without sword or club." The king returned: "I give thee leave." Then Daniel took pitch, fat and hair, and boiling them together, he made lumps and put them into the dragon's mouth.

2. The monster, swallowing the lumps, very soon burst asunder, and Daniel said to the king: "Behold him whom you worshiped!" The Babylonians hearing this, assembled in crowds, and said that the king had become a Jew; had destroyed Bel, killed the dragon, and put the priests to death. They came, therefore, to the king threatening and saying: "Deliver Daniel to us, or else we will destroy thee and thy house."

3. Although the king loved Daniel, he was forced through the violence of the people to give him up to their fury. Immediately they cast him into a den of lions. There were seven lions in the den to whom they gave two carcasses



every day and two sheep; but now, nothing was given them, that they might devour Daniel. Yet Daniel remained unhurt.



DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN.

4. Daniel, having been for some time in the lions' den, needed food. Now there was at that time in Judea a prophet named Habacuc, who carried food to the field for the reapers. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Carry thy dinner to Daniel, who is in the lions' den at Babylon."

5. Habacuc replied: "Lord, I never saw Babylon, nor do I know the den." Then the angel took him by the hair of his head,—carried him in an instant to Babylon, and placed him over the den of the lions. And Habacuc called to Daniel: "Thou servant of God, take the dinner that God has sent thee!" Daniel exclaimed: "Thou hast



remembered me, O God, and Thou hast not forsaken them that love Thee." Then he arose and ate.

6. But the angel of the Lord carried Habacuc back to his own place. On the seventh day the king came to bewail Daniel. And standing near the den he looked in and saw Daniel sitting amongst the lions, and he cried with a loud voice: "Great art Thou, O Lord, the God of Daniel!"

7. Immediately he drew Daniel out of the den, but those who had desired the prophet's death he threw in, and they were devoured by the lions in a moment. Then the king said: "Let all the inhabitants of the whole earth fear the God of Daniel, for He is the Savior, working signs and wonders."

#### QUESTIONS.

1. What did the people of Babylon and their king worship? What did the king say one day to Daniel? What did Daniel tell the king? What did Daniel do when the king gave permission? 2. What happened to the monster? What did Daniel then say to the king? What did the Babylonians do on hearing this? What did they say? What did they threaten to do? 3. What was the king forced to do through the violence of the people? What did they do with Daniel? Did the lions harm Daniel? 4. How long had Daniel been in the lions' den? Who was at that time in Judea? What did the angel of the Lord tell him when he was carrying food to the reapers? 5. What did Habacuc tell the angel? What did the angel then do? What did Habacuc call to Daniel? What did Daniel exclaim? 6. What did the angel then do with Habacuc? Why did the king come to the lions' den on the seventh day? When he saw Daniel sitting among the lions, what did he cry with a loud voice? 7. What did he do with Daniel? What did he do to those who had desired the prophet's death? What was the result? What did the king then say?